

## **Statement of Governor Haley Barbour**

Marsha and I join all Mississippians in sadness at the loss of Governor Kirk Fordice this morning. Kirk Fordice was a close, personal friend for more than 35 years. Our prayers go out to his family during this difficult time.

Kirk Fordice was a true Mississippi success story. He was a successful Vicksburg businessman who willed himself into the state's highest office, achieving what many believed impossible at the time.

He focused our state's energies on economic development during his terms and moved Mississippi's economy into a new era of growth. He imprinted his brand of fiscal conservatism on Mississippi's budget by creating the first-ever "Rainy Day Fund" and leaving Mississippi with a \$350 million surplus. He introduced welfare reform to Mississippi and helped make ours a two-party state.

His frank, outspoken and unwavering style made him a respected figure with his political opponents and a beloved Governor by Mississippians across the state who elected him twice.

We mourn with the Fordice family for the loss of a loved one, and we mourn with Mississippi for the loss of a leader.

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